Message from the chair

I am very pleased to start my tenure as Chair of the Department of Technical Communication in such exciting times. The explosive growth in computing power and the Web, the penetration of new technologies into our daily lives in growing abundance, the globalization of the profession, and the spreading recognition of the vital role played by information design in successful communication challenge all of us—practitioners as well as educators—to push the power of our discipline to its limits. In the TC Department, we as educators face the additional challenge of crafting an educational experience that gives students both the core skills and the inventive powers to become the creative leaders of the future.

In this issue of PosTComm, we tell you about the steps that we have been taking, individually and as a department, to respond to the challenges that we face. We also invite you to forge a partnership with us so that we can make the most of the opportunities offered us by change. We hope that you will stay in touch with us, become a regular visitor to our website, get to know our students and offer them opportunities in your organization, and participate in many other ways in our community of department friends and former, current, and future students. We look forward to hearing from you!

Judy Ramey, Chair

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Thanks to all the TC faculty, staff, and alumni who contributed time and effort to this publication.

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Technical Communication is HOT!

In the ever-changing world of technical communication, one of our biggest challenges has been to demonstrate to others the value of our unique skills and talents. For years we rose to this challenge, promoting our profession as we promoted ourselves. Our perseverance, along with technological and economic forces, has helped technical communication to progress from an under-appreciated specialty to a hot commodity.

TC is finally coming into its own. The media are rife with news about this being the information age. "But," says TC department head Judy Ramsey, "information isn't really what you need; what you really need is communication. A database manager can manage information; a technical communicator can make that information meaningful to an audience for a purpose."

The salaries that TC people can demand indicate, in the most measurable way, the value of our product: communication. Salaries are rising. The STC's salary survey shows increasing salaries across the country, and the graph on this page shows UWTC alumni salaries are consistently above average. Professor Mary Coney said, "while our work has always been valuable, it hasn't always been perceived as valuable. Today, in many cases, TC students are coming out of school and commanding higher salaries than students from traditional engineering disciplines."

Just five to ten years ago, TC people had to explain the profession to others. Today, companies understand, recognize, and value the skills of TC students. Lynn McManus, the Recruiting Strategist for SBT "Once and former student, said, "technical writing used to be thought of as a cost-center rather than a revenue-center, and I think now there's a greater acknowledgment of tech writers' impact on product quality. Instead of companies calling in technical writers at the end of a project to pretty it up, they are now hiring us to be an integral part of the development process."

Judy Ramsey envisions the future of TC, "I think that content computing and information design are going to be as glamorous as film production was in the past, and our students have the skills".

Median starting salaries for UW TC alumni compared with nationwide STC median starting salaries. Not only are the salaries increasing, but UW's TC graduates continue to earn starting salaries above the national mean.
The WebFeat teams upgrade the College of Engineering’s web presence

Take a collection of decentralized units in an organization. Ask each unit to design a web site for itself. Tie all the individual sites together with a top-level "umbrella" site to provide navigation, identity, and some degree of consistency. Regardless of the quality of your umbrella page, the lack of consistency and coordination between the sites will be apparent.

The College of Engineering’s departments had built a web presence from the bottom up before the college began a concerted effort to improve its web site. After expressing her dissatisfaction with the old web presence, Dean Dense Denton of the College asked the TC department to improve the websites for six units of the college over six months. The result was WebFeat, a large-scale web-development project headed by Judy Ramey and Dave Farkas. The WebFeat team members were students who brought a wide range of experience and technical expertise to the project, working together in six unit teams along with one core team.

WebFeat mirrored real-world projects. Matt Hildes, a student involved in the project, said, "WebFeat was not an ordinary class exercise—we actually had a client." The clients were the participating units: Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Bioengineering, Materials Science Engineering, Academic Affairs, and our own department, Technical Communication. Students faced the challenge of determining who the decision makers were for each department and then finding the right balance to make everybody—the clients, the group members, and, hopefully, the site’s users—happy with the results.

Each of the six unit teams investigated the audience for each unit’s web site (for instance, prospective students) and the function that the site was intended to serve (for instance, attracting top students in targeted research areas). Based on what they found, the unit teams created an information design for their unit. Meanwhile, the core team investigated the technical and design constraints and created an overall "look and feel" template for use by the unit teams.

The project, a part-time effort for all concerned, was very large and very long by academic standards. A typical class project might last a few weeks. Longer projects may take most of a quarter. WebFeat, by comparison, spanned two academic quarters.

The product WebFeat delivered to these clients was more than a polished web page. The WebFeat teams redesigned the sites and delivered a complete web-development suite to be used, updated, and modified by the participating departments. The WebFeat goal was to empower the departments, to contribute to their sense of site ownership, and to prepare them to maintain and upgrade their sites.

WebFeat itself was shaped at last as much by process as by product. Most of the student team members had never gone through any kind of systematic design process. How could the teams stay focused? How could the students maintain a global view of the project while they work on individual teams? How did individual achievements relate to the overall goals of the project?

The first tool to address this problem was a weekly progress report. In consultation with the rest of the team, students came up with weekly action items to move the team toward its goals.
Each week, students reported on the previous tasks and, again in consultation with the team, planned the next week’s activities. Together with email, the progress report provided individual team members a clear overview of the project.

The students’ concern was communication: how can a sense of cohesiveness and community develop? One answer was shared physical space. In a large room, each team had a cubicle with divider walls on which they posted various working displays—“data walls.” The teams agreed that everybody would be allowed to look at everybody else’s data wall; eventually, inspecting everybody’s progress, or “walking the walls,” became a start-up ritual for meetings. This helped the teams keep track of each other’s progress.

The WebFeat Gazette, a weekly email newsletter, opened another channel for communication among groups. The Gazette announced items of general interest, offered tips and techniques, and gave students a summary report of each team’s weekly activities. Students said the Gazette also motivated them through friendly competition; each team wanted to come up with an idea that the other teams would adopt.

The WebFeat project stands as testimony to the quality of students and faculty alike in the TC Department. WebFeat produced a complex and sophisticated deliverable that demonstrated the team member’s abilities to work collectively, integrate skills and ideas, and apply what they have learned. Everyone involved, including students who were not TC majors, increased both technical skills and process skills; much of the mentoring and teaching in the project came from the more advanced students, who extended their own grasp of the material. The team members have received extensive recognition not only among their peers but also from the administration of the College of Engineering at the UW.

Today, the six sites that the WebFeat teams designed are in a “display case” separate from the living, evolving, and changing sites that the clients maintain. The “display case” will preserve the original site design, and you are invited to visit this site at: diamond.uwce.washington.edu/-showcase

Department Administrator becomes a vegetable!

Anita Smith, TC dept. administrator, became a tomato for the day to extol the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables. The promotion, which the college actively promoted for a year, is called “Fruit a day.” Luckily, Anita didn’t return back to her vegetable form.
Awards and Achievements

The UW STC chapter received the Pacesetter award at the STC conference in Toronto in May. The Pacesetter is awarded to STC chapters for outstanding achievement during the previous year.

The UW STC chapter was successful in its efforts to have monthly guest speakers on a wide range of topics throughout the year, including speakers from Nintendo, Microsoft, Cole & Weber Advertising, and others. The main reason for the award, however, was the success of the chapter’s industry “blenders,” the twice-annual networking and social event with Puget Sound STC members and representatives from industry.

Doug Pyle, president of the chapter during the award-winning year, along with David Gellman, said, “overall, I believe that the UW chapter increased its profile with both the Puget Sound STC members and with local industry, which was my goal for the chapter last year.”

Mark Alway and Jeremy Watts were Vice Presidents. Lani Huson was Secretary, Nowelle Wright was Historian, and Marsha Ruthford was Chapter Liaison during the last year. “We could not have been as successful as we were without everybody’s contribution to our shared vision and shared goals,” said Doug. “We worked hard to improve the standing of the chapter and appreciated the ongoing support from everyone in the department.” The Chapter also thanks Laura Ramsey, Sponsor and Director of the STC of Region Seven, for nominating our chapter for the award.

Technical Japanese continues to grow

In his keynote speech at the American Society of Mechanical Engineers conference, Dr. Russell Jones said that today’s engineers need four important skills to be successful in today’s marketplace: foreign language proficiency, foreign culture background, international business know-how, and international professional and technical standards.

The Technical Japanese Program (TJP), a masters’ degree program that trains engineering students in Japanese, helps engineers achieve each of these four goals.

A federally-funded program, TJP for graduate students and its counterpart for practicing professionals, JPP (Japanese Program for Professionals), are both under the aegis of the TIC department at the University of Washington. TJP combines engineering with language and cultural training in a way that is not being done anywhere else in the country.

Today, the demand for people with TJP training is increasing, and the department gets almost one inquiry every week from recruiters looking to hire TJP students. The number of students and the number of applicants has also increased. In the past, the department has accepted between five and seven students. This year, the department is adding the most they can accommodate: ten students.

“Yet this summer we haven’t sent out any promotional materials. Usually we have almost no applications around August, but this year we already have over 30 applications,” said Michio Hirasaki, director of the TJP. These students come from all different backgrounds; the course work in technical Japanese assumes students begin with an advanced level of language ability—two years of college-level Japanese or the equivalent.

A key feature of TJP is the internship in Japan. After the first year of course work, students choose between a two or six-month internship. These short-term assignments take place in a Japanese company, university, or lab in Japan.
UWTC outlines a new international focus

Yes, the TC department is still located on the "lower level" (unenlightened onlookers might mistake this for the basement) of Loew Hall, but the department's influence reaches across the globe.

To connect TC students with cutting-edge research in the field, the department is making international studies one of its new areas of emphasis. This new focus, which will involve students as well as scholars, is the department's response to today's climate of globalization in both the corporate world and in our field.

TC students, grads and undergrads, will soon have the opportunity to participate in student exchange programs, collaborate with students across the globe on international research projects, and study alongside visiting scholars. Students can participate in the first formal student exchange program with the University of Twente in the Netherlands this spring.

This year, a scholar from the University of Twente in the Netherlands, Thea van der Geest, visited the Technical Communication department for six months. After Thea had surveyed numerous US universities that might help her with her research, which is about the organizational issues surrounding the World Wide Web, she chose two universities to visit: Carnegie Mellon and the University of Washington. Thea already knew the names of several faculty members of the UWTC department from their publications. For example, Thea wrote, "in our course on research on the effectiveness of text features our students read an article by Jan Sprydkakis, and in a course on document design processes we use an article by Dave Farkas."

Now that Thea is back at the University of Twente, our department is keeping the relationship strong with the Netherlands' equivalent to the TC department. Judy Rainey, who visited the University of Twente this summer, envisions the two colleges performing collaborative research at both the undergraduate and graduate level, using the Internet and email to communicate.

The TC department benefited from Thea's visit, too. Thea guest-lectured in Dave Farkas' multimedia class, and Dave also found her very valuable. "I benefited from our intellectual exchange. European scholars have different academic traditions than we do here," Dave said that Thea had him look at a book that he found interesting and relevant to his work, too; this book is one Dave would not have otherwise seen.

Soon after Thea left, we welcomed another international guest: graduate student Nerea Armendara from Pamplona, Spain (the city famous for the run with the bulls through the streets every year). After two months of research to determine the best place to study, she chose to visit the University of Washington's Technical Communication department. Nerea is a Ph.D. student interested in interface design.

In order to prepare for future exchanges and research projects, Mary Conley has received a grant from the UW Acting Provost for International Education to visit several European universities with whom we might collaborate. Some of these universities include the University of Technology at Compiègne, France; American University of Paris, France; University of Duisburg, Germany; Coventry University, England; and University College Dublin and University College Galway, Ireland.

Student exchange is not the only outcome of this new international emphasis: "a course on international technical communication is needed," said professor Jan Sprydkakis, "to help TC students learn to address issues of localization or internationalization in communicating with readers and users who are not native speakers of English." To meet this need, Jan is currently developing a course in international technical communication, to be offered in Winter 1998.
Faculty Profile: Dave Farkas

When computer users need help, they search online help or grab a manual. When the help authors need help, many of them turn to professor Dave Farkas. Today, Dave is the department's authority on the issues that surround new and emerging information technologies.

Computer technology is growing and converging with communication, changing how people interact with information. Dave Farkas recalls that when he joined TC back in 1983, paper was the fundamental medium for delivering technical content. "Computer documentation really meant manuals rather than help systems, and document design pretty much meant paper documents." As the world moved toward online information, Dave's research and teaching changed with it. His course in computer documentation now deals mostly with help systems and performance support tools such as wizards and coaches. His graduate seminar on information design examines the concepts and design principles underlying digital media—especially the World Wide Web. A new undergraduate course, Interactive Multimedia, takes a directly practical approach to multimedia design.

Dave's published work covers a variety of practical topics, ranging from professional ethics to editing (especially the problem of marking up documents online) to the best method for introducing unfamiliar terms in technical texts. Although Dave continues to see himself as a generalist, he has become an internationally recognized expert in computer documentation who has authored (and co-authored) two books on online help, two articles and a book chapter on the minimalist approach to documentation, and articles on other related topics.

Currently Dave is researching issues surrounding multimedia, including the problem of the impermanent nature of Web content. Dave is also researching the relationship between the metaphors that designers consciously use when creating Web sites and the metaphors that are an inherent part of the Web. Deeply absorbed in his work and committed to finding answers to newly emerging issues, Dave is one of those people who wishes he could live and work without having to sleep.

Deeply absorbed in his work and committed to finding answers to newly emerging issues, Dave is one of those people who wishes he could live and work without having to sleep.

Dave's enthusiasm for his research carries over to his students; Dave is known as a "high-energy" instructor. Students immediately recognize his interest in the material he teaches and his conviction that it is important. Dave notes, "I have never thought of technical communication as merely vocational. To master language and understand the complexities of communicating in the digital world is to become a more complete person. This is one reason I really enjoy stepping into the classroom."

For Dave, this has been a year of many milestones. He was elected an STC fellow, cited for his "exceptional achievement as a highly progressive educator and trainer of technical communicators; for excellence in conducting and publishing research; and for service to the Society at all levels." He was also promoted to full professor. His wife, Jean, retired from her job as a Microsoft documentation manager and has switched to a new set of activities—which include teaching technical communication courses part-time for UW Extension. Their daughter, Eva, graduated from Maclester College with a degree in computer sciences, a minor in psychology. She has an interest in human-computer interaction. She has just begun a career at Andersen Consulting. "I can imagine Eva unexpectedly showing up at the same professional meetings that I attend. That would be great, but maybe a bit strange." On top of all that, he turned 50.

Dave grew up in New York City and the New Jersey suburbs, studied at the University of Rochester (B.A.), the University of Chicago (M.A.), and the University of Minnesota (Ph.D.). He taught at Texas Tech University (Lubbock).
and West Virginia University (Morgantown) before joining the UW. Dave sees a bit of a humor in these various moves, "Except for me, the Farkas family has never left the New York City area. I've given my family and relatives a bit of a geography lesson."

Many years ago, while they were dating, Jean coaxed Dave into taking her out on a canoe. This may have been a mistake, for canoeing has become a passion for Dave. He now has three boats: a whitewater boat, a super-fast flatswater boat, and a tandem boat for trips with Jean. Where he takes a canoe is not especially important to him: "I could paddle a scenic river, or I could settle for paddling inside a dark water tank. What's most important to me is the feel of the blade in the water."

If you gaze out on a local lake or river, no matter what month of the year, you might see a big, red-bearded fellow paddling along. Navigating his boat, far from all computers, modems, and keyboards, Dave fills at least some of his time contemplating how people navigate digital information. As you watch the water reflecting the shape below, Dave glides ahead, reflecting on the world of cyberspace.  

TC broadens its appeal

A record number of people applied to the TC department this autumn, and the number of applicants is growing every year. In response to this burgeoning interest, the department expanded its course offerings to increase access and broaden its appeal.

By UW standards, the Department of Technical Communication is small. Typically, just 24 new majors are admitted each year. This year, twice as many students can participate in the program: the department is prepared to add a dozen additional TC majors and another dozen candidates for the new minor in Technical Communication.

To accommodate more students, the department will begin to offer all required courses twice each year. Even with more meeting times, the department may not be able to accommodate students who are not TC majors or minors who want to enroll in TC classes.

TC is not just for majors anymore: a few lucky folks will be able to add a Minor in Technical Communication to their major. With the high demand for TC talents, students pursuing Science, Engineering, and English majors, to name a few, will find the TC minor program especially appealing.

In addition to offering extra classes and the new TC minor, the department is now offering students more course choices. Tom Williams and Dave Farkas are working with the School of Communications and the Educational Technology...
Ingrid Tenggren ('83) quit Microsoft in 1992 to enjoy "the Good Life." She is still married to James Prekeges (LIWTC class of '84). Her official job title is "My kids, Mom." She is Mom to two kids. Nickolas was three in March of 1997, and Anna was born this last February. I am thrilled with all the progress and recognition of LIWTC.
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Kimberly A. Parris ('87) is a User Assistance Manager at Microsoft. Kimberly is celebrating her ten-year anniversary with Microsoft later this year.
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Susan Krala ('87) works for Microsoft Technical Support as a Support Lead. She’s also starting her second year in a masters degree program in Management at Antioch University, Seattle.
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Lynn McManus ('87) is a recruiter specializing in technical communication and web development professionals. Lynn’s been active in various professional organizations including STC and ICS, and is also on the Steering Committee for the new TC Alumni Club. "I’m looking forward to meeting former classmates and other alumni at the first meeting of the club. How exciting that we will be able to share our experiences again."
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Annalise M. (Dickey) Beck ('88) was a Public Information Specialist at the UW for seven years. She married Emil Beck on May 2, 1997; he’s in the U.S. Coast Guard, and they moved to Honolulu this summer. Annalise joined the STC Aloha chapter and plans to remain active in STC. "I hope everyone else from the 1988 graduating class is doing great."

Anette E. Olney (nee Oder) ('88) is the Senior Technical Writer/Editor in various contracts. She was recently elected vice president of the Puget Sound Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. She moved "back" to the Puget Sound area after four years in Anchorage, AK, where she worked at an engineering consulting firm and at the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. as a technical writer. Anette also was the VP and then President of the Alaska Chapter of STC. "It’s great to be back in the area, and the job market for our profession is amazing! It’s also great to see how strong and organized the student chapter has become."
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Velma Jones ('89) is a Marketing Assistant for Lynden Air Freight. Velma married Eric White in 1992, and they added a son, Samuel, in July 1997.

Katherine Brennan Murphy ('89) is a Manufacturing Training Development Engineer at Tektronix.
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Paul Samek ('89) is a Technical Communicator at PACCAR Inc. He uses Adobe Framemaker and Acrobat to maintain 3000+ pages of heavy-duty vehicle operation and maintenance information on CD and on company intranet.
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Drew Haffner ('90) is a real estate salesperson for John L. Scott real estate. He writes: "I have a great 5 yr. old daughter, Kayla. Built my own house. Writing short stories and song lyrics. I miss technical writing!"

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Jennifer A. Scott ('90) is an Advanced Computing Technologist at Boeing. She writes: "Boeing career = variety: two years technical in factory, four years supporting Chinese customers, current work in research and technology software development natural language processing. I got my MBA in International Business at Seattle U. in 1995. She has two children: a boy, Vincent, age 7, and a girl, Elektra, age 4.
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Michael Lamar (91) has been a contract Technical Writer and Illustrator for two years. He is very active with the Carolina chapter of STC and the Raleigh Jaycees.

Joy Tollman Lachler (91 and 92) is a Technical Writer with the SAS Institute Inc. in Cary, North Carolina. She celebrated her two-year anniversary with SAS Institute on 8/16/97. Joy was a member of the SAS Institute Team that received the STC Carolina Chapter's Online Competition 1996 Best of Show Award for Solutions@Work " (web version) and the 1996 Award of Excellence for Solutions@Work " (help version) in February. "I'm currently busy writing fun and managing the online help project for one of the SAS products."
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Christine Sophos (91) is a Technical Editor at URS Grammer, Inc. (Engineering and Architectural Services).

Liz Hale (Mary E. "Liz" Hale) (92) started her own business, The Hypermedia Group, specializing in online documentation in February '97.
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Constance "Babs" LaRue (92) is working for a small "how to" book publisher in Dubuque, Iowa, designing margins and gutters. She reports

that she finds inspiration hiking in Iowa's many mountain ranges. When not hiking, she and her husband Brad fill their spare time raising wallabies.

Carol A. Robinson (92 MS; 95 BS) is the User Interface Designer at Health Systems Technologies, Inc. in Seattle.
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Susan Scott (92) has "retired for a while." A self-described "boat bum," Susan is presently sitting out the hurricane season on her sailboat "Journey" in the Rio Dulce, Guatemala. "We are planning to cruise the islands in the Caribbean for the next couple of years."
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Robin Taylor (92) is the Alaska Editor for Fishing and Hunting News.
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Lisa Davis (93) is a self-employed user interface designer and consultant. "I've spent the past year consulting (for Apple and Seattle Software Labs) and enjoying my daughter, who celebrated her first birthday in July."
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Jeff Crist (94) is the Technical and Creative Director for the City of Seattle's Online Interactive Media (Internal and External Web sites). "In my spare time, I also serve as a consultant, helping businesses sell their products and services on the Internet. I have won several awards for my work including finalist recognition in the Pewettal Information Infrastructure Awards, and I was awarded and featured in the Computerworld Premiers: 100 web sites contest earlier this year. I am looking to expand my contributions into other communities and businesses."
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Patricia M. Harn ('94) has been a contract Technical Editor at Boeing since fall of 1995. She bought a little condo on lower Queen Anne hill. Email: patricia.harn@boeing.com

Stacey Houston ('94) is a Product Manager for Edmark. After graduating, she worked as a project manager at Medio Multimedia, overseeing design and development of Medio Magazine and Medio's hybrid (Internet and CD-ROM) magazine. Currently, Stacey oversees two product lines at Edmark, a company that creates children's educational multimedia titles. Email: stacayh@edmark.com

David Oberstadt ('94) is a Software Engineer at IBM. David wrote: "I am involved with several successful data products—DB2, Visual Explain, and Net.Data. I write online help, hardcopy books, Web pages, and have tested lots of sample code for Net.Data. Last year I received a promotion and purchased a modest home." David would be pleased to talk with any students who are considering an internship at IBM's Santa Teresa Lab. Email: daveob@3ps.net; daveob@vnet.ibm.com

Ralph Flem ('94) writes documentation for dirty cars on windshields using his index finger. Web: action.simplenet.com/washme.htm

Paula Thomson ('94) is an Information Office/Spung's Basker for the CIA. Paula received an Exceptional Performance Award for editorial work on covering Russian media reporting on Duma elections in 1995. wrote an Internet report on Yeltsin's home page that was read by VP Al Gore, and received an Exceptional Performance Award for using the Internet to retrieve articles from Russian newspapers. She is currently writing selections lists (which are lists containing brief summaries in English of contents in Russian newspapers) and mentoring a student who worked in her office this summer. Email: paula@spung.net

Cathy Anderson ('95) has worked for the past year as Technical Content Copy Editor at Microsoft. Email: cathy@theics.com; Web: www.theics.com/cathy/

Carl Chatfield ('95) is the Project lead person for Office User Assistance at Microsoft Corporation. Carl writes: "Our first child, Alden Henderson Chatfield, arrived in August '96. My latest Microsoft project, the Office 97 Resource Kit, shipped in January '97." Email: carlch@microsoft.com; Web: wisechat.com

Gary Faircloth ('95) is a Software Engineer ('go figure...) with IBM. "After completing a Masters in HCI or CompSci, I want to return to the NW to my daughter, T侏. I want to work in a company that believes that making computers more usable and reliable than an appliance is more important than making money (ha)!" Email: gar@j5.net; Web: sj.net/~gaz

Chris George ('95) is a VP, Advanced Technology with Verxex Technologies, creating web DB applications. Chris is project manager of a $100,000 intranet DB application. Email: chris@verxex.com; Web: www.verxex.com

Cindy King ('95) is Director of Information Design at Chia Bobko, Inc. She also continues as a lecturer for the TC Department, teaching TC 310 (Computers and Technical Communication) and TC 403 (Project Management). Other career milestones include work in 1994 as a consultant doing training development and delivery, and from 1995-96 as Training Manager at Salon & Taylor. Email: cindylk@bobko.com; Web: www.bobko.com

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Karen A. Noblet ('95) is a nationally-published writer; she began a freelance writing business—A Better Write Source—this year. Email: karen.noblet@acm.com

Jill Zoeller ('95) is a Technical Writer at Microsoft. "After experiencing the thrill of working for a small company and the harsh reality of missing a few paychecks, I found a job at a better-funded company: Microsoft!" Email: jillz@microsoft.com
Angie Burlingame (‘96) is an Associate Learning Products Engineer at Hewlett Packard. Email: angie@hpl.hp.com

Minna Choe (‘96) is QA Engineer at Adobe Systems, Inc. She got her first full-time job at Adobe testing PageMaker for localization into other countries; now she’s working on PM6.5 Korea. Email: mchoe@adobe.com Web: www.sea1f0.com/kchoe

Norm Ely (‘96) is Lead Designer at The Zone Network in Seattle. “I’m doing my dream job—I got to be both creative and intelligent designing web sites for a young startup company. Finally got rid of my ’71 VW Bus, too!” And yes, for those still wondering, Norm is still dreaming about moving back to California. Email: norm@ttzn.com Web: www.mountainzone.com

Gerald S. Ferry (‘96) is Director of Technology and Development of a major website and software design project. Email: gsf@serv.net Web: www.serv.net/–gsf/

Dan Jones (‘96) started his employment as a Technical Writer at Boeing one week after graduation. He writes, “one of my websites is now mandated— all manufacturing sites implementing the new DCA/MRM initiative must participate by contributing their policy decisions. This site should top 2500 pages by November.” Email: daniel.c.jones@boeing.com docjones@w.net

Jenny Lai (‘96) is a Software Engineer at Fluke Corporation. Email: jial@cc.flake.com Web: www.flake.com

LeAnne R. Lay (‘96) recently started a position at Tally Printer Corporation as a technical writer. “I am in control of the technical publications for this company. After graduation, I took time off to travel to GA and IL, before starting work. I look forward to obtaining an advanced degree, hopefully at the University of Washington.” Email: leanne@tally.com Web: www.tally.com

Lisa Nicholes Sanford (‘96) is a Liability Engineer for the Internet Client and Collaboration Division, working on the Internet Explorer web browser. Lisa is employed with Microsoft Corporation via S&T Onsite. Email: a-sanford@microsoft.com

Angel Shemelish (‘96) an Information Designer for Tandem Computers, Inc. Angel started at Tandem on June 17, 1996, got married February 8, 1997, and had a son, Abel Patrick Teklemariam, on April 24, 1997. “Now I have a wonderful family and a job I enjoy doing. I telecommute (work from home).” Email: shemelish.angel@tandem.com

Matthew Shobe (‘96) is a Content Architect for Digital Knowledge Assets, LLC. Matthew writes: “Basically I do a little of everything, but it includes healthy doses of usability, documenta-
tion, interaction design, and of course tuning my rhetoric to best fit the needs of disparate audiences. Thank you indeed, Mary Cowey.” Matthew moved from Andersen Consulting to Digital Knowledge Assets in the fall of 1996 to pursue the start-up lifestyle. Matthew became a homeowner near downtown Chicago last April; he writes, “If grad students are encouraged to look up should they find themselves in the Windy City.” Email: matts@dkweb.com Web: www.okawab.com

Pamela Denchfield (‘97) is a Technical Writer at Boeing through Superior Design Co. Pamela edited a user guide for Spaceballs Medical and edited and improved the layout of a 1/2 page appendix of a user guide for Siemens Medical Ultrasound Group (both projects were print manuals). For Boeing, Pamela will document Saros Documents Manager software. Email: pdenchfield@washington.edu

Donna Fulcher (‘97) is a technical writer at Boeing Everett 777 Tooling Library; her job title is SPEEA tech writer grade 34. Donna graduated on June 14 and went to work on June 19, editing internal documents “released” (published) for engineers and manufacturers. Email: donna.l.fulcher@boeing.com
Lynn Gottlieb ('97) is doing procedure writing for Dynaca Engineering (contract work for Boeing). A "returning student," Lynn’s milestones this year were graduation and getting a job.
Email: lynngottlieb@boeing.com
gtt8@osp.net

Jason D. Grose ('97) is Second Lieutenant at the Basic School for the United States Marine Corps. Jason graduated in June of 1997 and received a commission in the Marine Corps after ten years of enlisted duty. He is currently going through a six-month infantry school in Virginia.
Email: jdgrose15@aol.com
Web: numbers.vol.com/jdgrose15

Don McKee ('97) spent the summer hiking and mountain climbing in WA and CA, and just returned from 2 1/2 weeks traveling in Europe (Germany, Luxembourg, France, and Switzerland) with his wife, Denise, and their two children. "The party’s over now, though," he writes. "I will be seeking employment as soon as my kids go back to school."
Email: dmckee@u.washington.edu

Joe Palmer ('97) is a Student Naval Flight Officer for the U.S. Navy. Joe received a commission as an Ensign in the Navy after he graduated.
Email: jpalmer@cheney.net

Judy Ray ('97) is a Senior Member of the Technical Team at AT&T Wireless Services. Judy earned a Director position and eventually a VP position in the Technical Development and Quality Assurance areas.
Email: judy.ray@atwna.com

Liz Ruest ('97) is a Technical Editor at Microsoft. She is expecting her first child in January.
Email: lruest@Microsoft.com

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TC updates its curriculum to reflect a changing industry

Continued from page 9

A new program to produce interdisciplinary classes to investigate the psychology of multimedia learning.

Another new course offering is "Communicating About Science and Technology." This course explores the science news publishing process, from researching the topic and interviewing the sources to communicating scientific ideas to lay readers, technical audiences, and members of the news media. This course is offered for the first time on an experimental basis as part of the activities of Deborah Illman, who is a National Science Foundation fellow and Research Assistant Professor in the TC department.

Digital media is rapidly growing as a preferred means of distributing information; because of this trend, students may now choose print production or multimedia as the next step after TC 411 (Visual Media in Technical Communication).
Meet the new grad students

Elizabeth Chapple earned a BA in German Studies at Stanford University and speaks several languages, including German, Spanish, and Japanese. She comes to the TC department from the United Kingdom, where she worked as an editorial freelancer. Beth was awarded a College of Engineering Stanley Fellowship for 1997-98.

Burt Culver earned a BS at The Evergreen State College in Olympia and has experience as a bank teller, a paralegal, and an investment broker. A Seattle resident, Burt was a US Peace Corps volunteer and a US Fish and Wildlife intern. He enjoys hiking and mountain biking.

Marsha Haney joins TC from St. Louis, Missouri, where she earned a BS degree from Truman State University. A former research assistant, Marsha worked for the Forest Service in Montana, for the Mountain Research Station in Colorado, and for the Science Division at Truman State University.

Yukiko Kojima is on one-year scholarship from her job with the Sony Corporation Document Design Department in Japan. She was active in her local STC chapter and completed an intensive English course during the summer as preparation for the TC master's program.

Scott Mogul just completed two bachelor of science degrees at Oregon State University in Corvallis, one in Microbiology and the other in Psychology. Scott is interested in making science writing more understandable (and interesting) to non-scientists. After earning a master's degree in TC, Scott plans to pursue doctoral study in microbiology.

Bojana Ostojic joins TC from Microsoft Corporation, where she was a test engineer for internet projects and for several software packages involving geography multimedia. A citizen of Croatia, Boj was worked for the UW UWIRE Program and for new student orientation while working toward her BS degree in Computer Engineering.

Amy Scott has been a Support Enforcement Officer for the State of Washington, and, for the past year, a non-matriculated student in the TC department. Amy holds a BA in Linguistics from the UW and is interested in studying how best to deliver information to audiences with unusual physical needs, such as stroke victims and people with hearing or visual impairments.

Karen Sharkey is already familiar to most TC students because for the past three years she has been Program Assistant for the department. Karen holds a BS in Earth Science from Eastern Michigan University and a teaching certificate for the states of Michigan and Washington. Karen was a lab technician at an Ann Arbor hospital for over twenty years prior to moving to the Seattle area in 1992.

Megan Taylor holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Physics and English from Whittier College in Whittier, California. Most recently, she was an Admission Counselor for Whittier College and has experience as an undergraduate researcher and teaching aide. Megan plans to combine her love of science and writing to make strange more interesting to people without science backgrounds.
Faculty updates

The department web page contains a faculty section, which contains more detail about each faculty member. You can view the faculty web site at this address:
www.uwct.washington.edu/faculty/

This Faculty Update contains each faculty members’ trav-activities, achievements, or experiences for the past year.

Mary Coney
mconey@uwct.washington.edu
- Currently researching the diaries written by Mathias, who was the commander of Hanford during World War II, when Hanford was built for plutonium production. Mathias’s diaries represent a piece of technical writing in an historical setting, and Mary is examining the rhetoric and language used in this document.
- Launched the TC department’s international expansion program. Wrote a proposal for the Provost’s office under the Program of International Education Student exchange. Received a grant to visit, in Winter Quarter, 1998, several universities with whom our department might want to establish connections: two in France, one in Germany, one in England, and possibly two in Ireland.
- Served on President McCormick’s Ethics Law committee, a committee designed to revise the university’s policies.
- Continues to serve on the Faculty council for faculty affairs, which she chaired the year before.

Phil Bereano
phil@uwct.washington.edu
- Served as chair for the committee on Data Acquisition, Storage, Dissemination of the national American Civil Liberties Union.
- Was guest editor for the Technology and Society journal, summer 1997 (IEEE). This issue was in commemoration of the life and work of BenLinder, his former student, who was assassinated by the Contras in Nicaragua while working on an engineering project to bring electricity to rural peasants. The journal’s articles were on sustainable development and democracy in Latin America; one article told about the completion of Ben’s work.
- Organized the symposium on The Threats to Civil Liberties Posed by Genetic Research for the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Seattle last February.

Dave Farkas
farkas@uwct.washington.edu
See “Faculty Profile” on page 9.
**Mark Haselkorn**

mark@uwotc.washington.edu

- Currently Mark is finishing up the evaluation report on PuSH-Ime, the Puget Sound Help Me system, which is the largest project that he has done in the area of transportation.
- Stepped down as department chair so he can devote more attention to his projects.
- Served as a consultant and project advisory member on a project out of the National Libraries of Medicine: “Planning and Evaluating Information Outreach Among Minority Communities.” Representing TC, he helped manage the entire project.
- Served as President of PCS, the Professional Communication Society in IEEE.
- Currently he is spending most of his time on the Year 2000 problem (Y2K). He is writing an IEEE information statement on this problem, writing the definitive statement on what it is as a symptom of a larger problem in the way computer systems are developed, maintained, and modernized.

**Miyako McDavid Ima**

mimai@typ.washington.edu

- Completed the drill plans for JPP course which integrate 4 skills of language.
- Hosted an intensive session for JPP course.

**Keiko Nakamura**

knakamura@typ.washington.edu

- Completed JPP course materials including course packet for four quarters.
- Hosted a two-day intensive session for JPP students in September.
- Made a presentation at a workshop by TJP last September on “Distance Learning at University of Washington” (on JPP).
Carolyn Plumb

plumb@u.washington.edu

- Received an $1,000 grant from UW’s Office of Educational Research to come up with a plan to assess the effectiveness of the engineering writing program.
- Directed the effort to revitalize the TC home page through WebFeat.
- Designed (and now maintains) the home pages for the engineering writing courses (ENGA 231/333).
- With Judy Ramey, submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation: Using a Collaborative Writing Assessment Program and a Virtual Writing Community to Develop a Discourse Community of Engineering Writers.

Jan Spyridakis

jant@uwtc.washington.edu

- Received a grant from STC to conduct a study to explore what factors influence how well readers recall information in technical text. Jan’s proposal abstract outlines why this is important. “If empirical research can show that some variables or combinations of variables influence reader performance more than others, technical writers and editors should be able to allocate their efforts more effectively.”
- Made four presentations at the ITCC (International Technical Communication Conference) in Toronto. Her presentations included the following topics: “Surveys and Questionnaires in Usability Studies,” “Writing a Winning Proposal,” “Strategies in Technical Communication,” and “Conducting research in Technical Communication.”
- Was named a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication, the highest rank that the Society can confer upon a member. She was cited for her long and distinguished performance as a researcher and teacher of technical communication, for actively encouraging students to enter the profession, for advancing the art of technical communication through industrial consulting, and for valuable contributions to the Society.

Judy Ramey

jramey@u.washington.edu

- Became department chair in July.
- Moved LUTE, the Laboratory for Usability Testing and Evaluation to a new space that is three times as big as before. The lab will be available for collaborative use by people in the community, for student projects as well as for corporate-funded research. People who want to lock at the space can email Judy at the above address.
- Co-directed WebFeat (see “WebFeat” on page 4), then went to a conference in Amsterdam to report on it. Developing interactive Systems ’97, WebFeat was started in January and completed in June: indeed, it was a whirlwind project.
Michio Tsutsui

- Initiated the International TC lecture series, which will introduce topics relating with communication across national borders. The first speakers in the series discussed recent developments in multimedia and global communication. These lectures are open to all who are interested; for more information, contact the program office at (206) 543-2567 or visit the TJP web site: www.tjp.washington.edu.

- Began new involvement in the Technology for Language Learning.

- Established grant programs for ongoing projects.

- Developed a new series of undergraduate TJP courses. TJP had previously been just for grad students.

Deborah Illman

- Organized a symposium on the subject of Accuracy in Science News Reporting at the national meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in February. Deborah’s symposium was one of the best attended sessions at the AAAS meeting. Nationally recognized experts in science communication, science journalism discussed topics relating to accuracy. This forum for journalists, scientists, public information officers, and science communication scholars examined one of the thorniest issues in science reporting.

- Currently Deborah is working on a survey on accuracy in science news reporting. “We are sampling members of the National Association of Science Writers and the Society of Professional Journalists to understand more about the controversial practice of pre-publication review as a check for accuracy.”

- Completed a science writing project on behalf of the UW which resulted in a book called Pathbreakers: A Century of Excellence in Science & Technology at the University of Washington and a companion full-color wall calendar. Chronicles the top advances in science and technology to come out of the UW. This book is available through the UW Bookstore.

Tom Williams

- Helped redesign a major portion of the TC curriculum (see “TC broadens its appeal” on page 9), is collaborating with Bill Winn from the EdTech program and Dave Farlas to put together a series of joint courses on media and multimedia.

- Was named an Associate Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication. Tom was cited for his dedicated commitment to the advancement and promotion of the profession and for dedicated service to the Society.

- He and grad student Deborah Harkas just finished an article on editing visual media.
Action items

With all that’s going on in TC, wouldn’t you like to be more involved? This section lists ways you can be more active in the UW’s TC department:

☐ Join the new TC Alumni Association.
   This is a great way to stay in touch with old friends and make new ones. We finally have a way to share our experiences and get together again as fellow TC alumni.
   For information on the TC Alumni Association, contact Lynn McManus at lynnmc@bicochet.net or call the TC department at (206) 543-2567.

☐ Contribute to the College fund drive.
   You will receive a letter this fall from the College of Engineering asking that you contribute to support activities such as start-up programs and capital projects. You may choose to designate your contribution to benefit the Department of Technical Communication.
   For more information, contact TC Administrator Anita Smith at (206) 685-1358.

☐ Check the Spotlight section of the TC web page for weekly events.
   Find out about current TC projects, activities, and events. Visit the new, WebFast-enhanced home page. This page will also contain an electronic version of this PostCamm newsletter:
   http://www.uw.tc.washington.edu/

☐ Volunteer to help house future international exchange students.
   Email Judy Ramey letting her know you’re interested.
   jramey@u.washington.edu